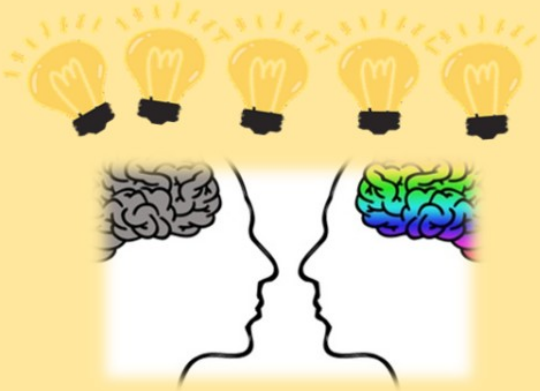
Useful of Brainstorming Techniques

S. LAKSHMANAN, M.Phil(Psy), M.A.(Psy), PGDBA., DCL.,
Psychologist (Govt. Regd)

Brainstorming

- **Brainstorming** is a group creativity technique by which efforts are made to find a conclusion for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by its members.
- In other words, brainstorming is a situation where a group of people meet to generate new ideas and solutions around a specific domain of interest by removing inhibitions. People are able to think more freely and they suggest as many spontaneous new ideas as possible.
- All the ideas are noted down without criticism and after the brainstorming session the ideas are evaluated. The term was popularized by Alex Osborn in the 1967 book Applied Imagination.



Brainstorming Techniques

Effective brainstorming techniques

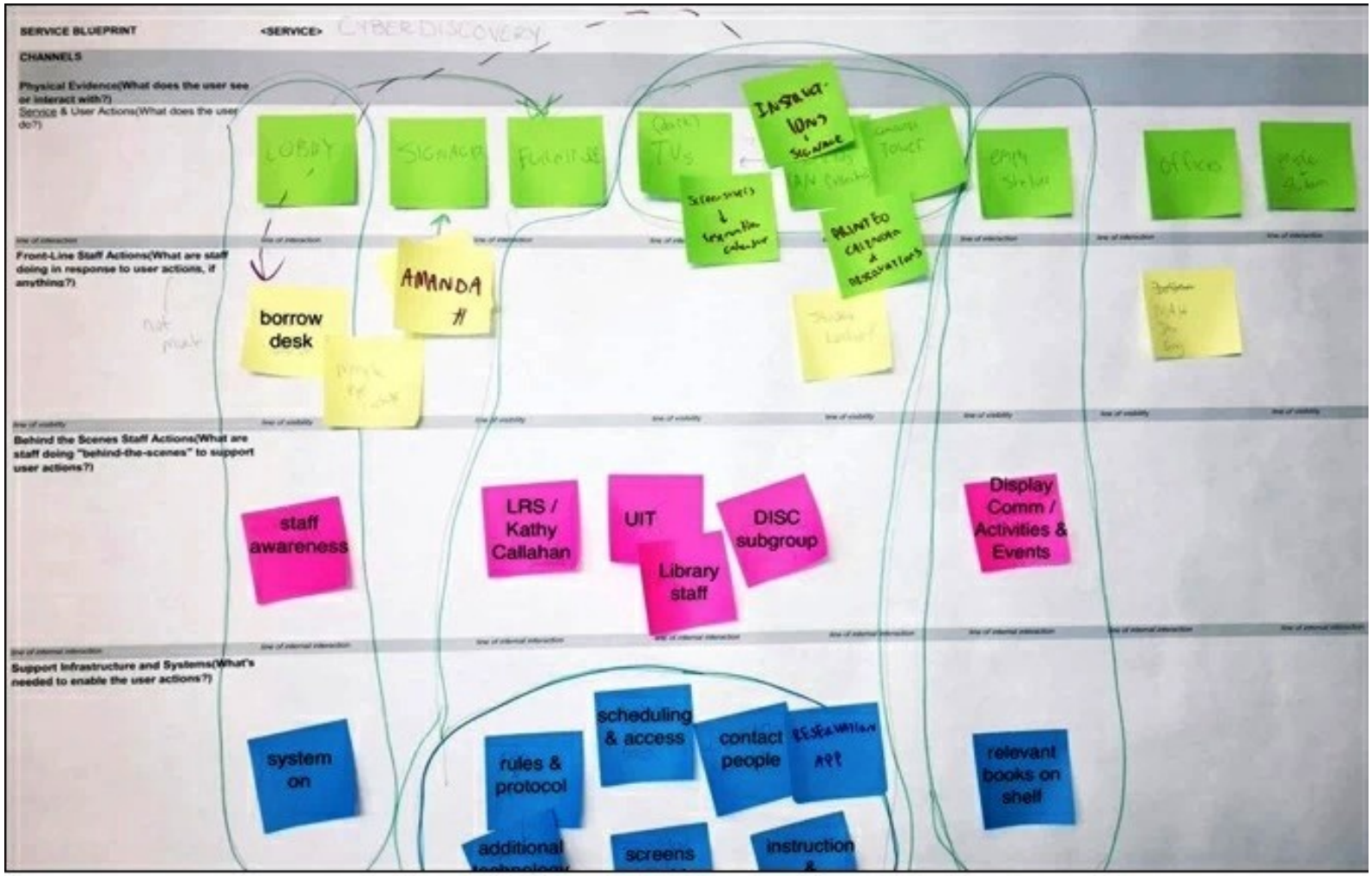
- Group brainstorming, if done properly, can promote creative thinking, bring a team together, and help you land on the perfect idea
- Brainstorms typically have three steps: idea capture, discussion and critique, and selection. The following strategies will help you and your team through all three stages.

Brainwriting

Brainwriting

- In this nonverbal brainstorming method, everyone writes down three ideas that relate to the topic of the brainstorm. Allow about four to six minutes for this process. Then everyone passes their ideas to the person on their right (or left, whichever you prefer), who will then build off of the ideas, adding bullet points or creative strategies. After another few minutes, everyone will pass the piece of paper again until it makes it all the way around the table. Once the ideas have made it around the circle, the group discusses them and decides which ideas are best to pursue.
- This technique can alleviate two of the biggest brainstorm pitfalls—unbalanced conversation and the anchoring effect—by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute and eliminating the bias toward the first idea.

Slip Writing



Slip Writing

Slip Writing

- Slip Writing is a simple yet effective brainstorming strategy. This is useful when you have a shy team member or not comfortable expressing ideas. Rather than speaking, members can contribute by writing down their ideas on a slip of paper. Similar to other brainstorming strategies, it gives an equal weight of opinions on both outspoken and quiet participants

Rapid ideation

Rapid ideation

- In rapid ideation, everyone writes down as many ideas as possible in a set amount of time before any ideas are discussed, critiqued, or fleshed out. For this brainstorming technique, you will need to set (and stick to) a time constraint, otherwise you'll risk losing the sense of urgency.
- This brainstorming exercise can be helpful to avoid the all-too-common scenario when an idea is shot down before it has time to grow, transform, and develop. By allowing everyone to capture their ideas before the critique begins, rapid ideation avoids the inevitable, premature shooting down of ideas. The time constraint can also prevent people from talking themselves out of an idea before they share it with a group—a common brainstorming mishap.

Figure storming

- Figure Storming is an amazing technique that falls on the principle of role-playing as you do in the acting world but in this technique, you impersonate a historical figure like Mother Theresa or Teddy Roosevelt. The impersonation is conducted to answer or discuss the matter at hand according to how that historical figure would have tackled such a scenario. Will that approach be positive or negative for the issue at hand?
- This technique helps you to acknowledge a scenario from a different point of view and not just in the traditional brainstorming light.
- Teammates can sometimes be ashamed or hesitant to put forth their creative ideas, but if someone else’s name is attached to the ideas—Oprah’s, for example—they are more likely to share it. Also, this brainstorming method removes some barriers that usually restrict creative thinking, like budget and time.

Eidetic image method

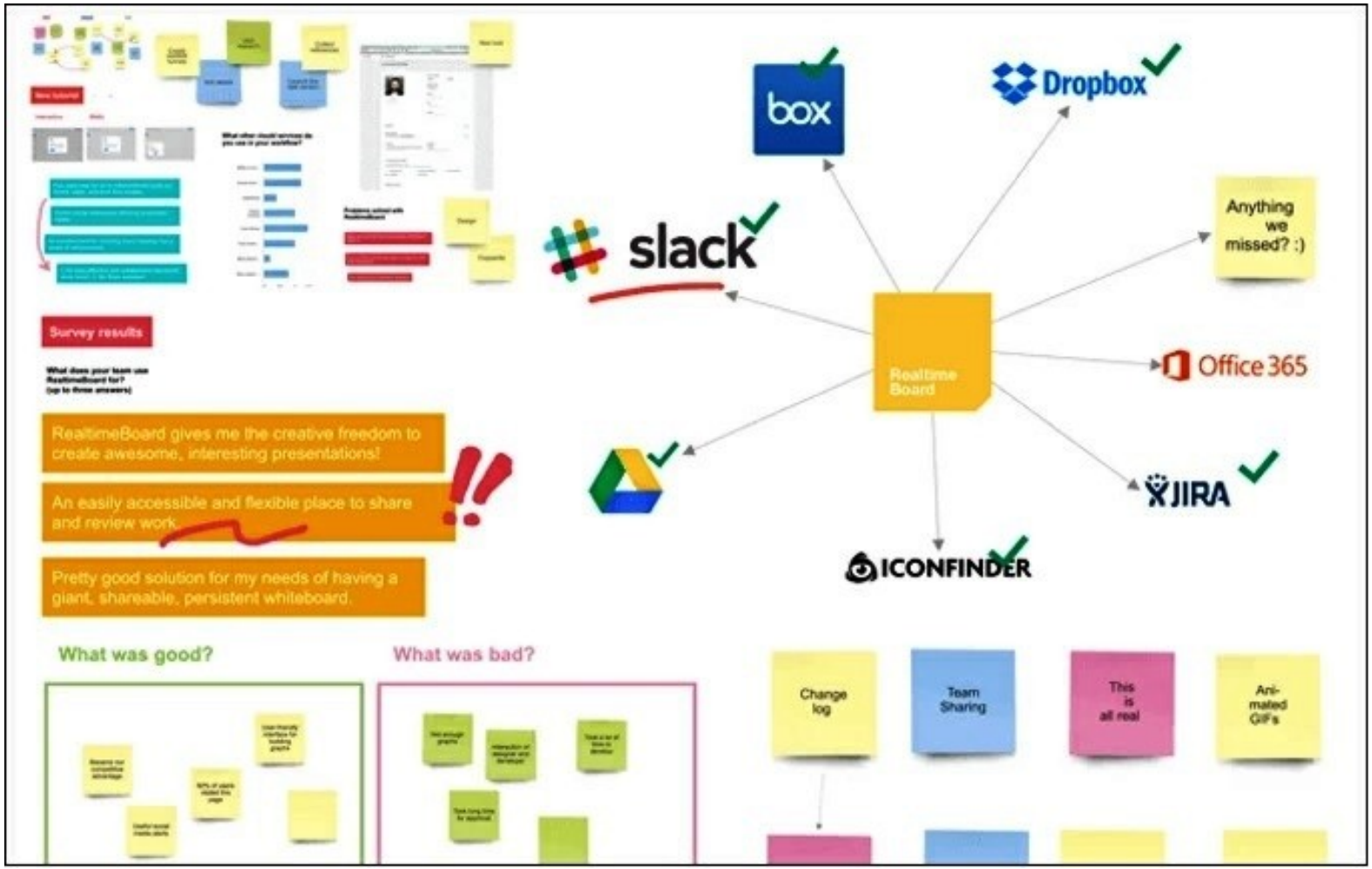
Eidetic image method

- This visualization-based method recommended by author and psychologist Jacqueline Sussman employs vivid images stored in our minds from all of our life experiences. Begin with intention-setting: Have the group close their eyes and clearly set an intention for what they will create—for example, an innovative smartphone. Each person in the group sets the intention in their mind that they will come up with a new phone design unlike previous ones.
- After these intentions are set, you will have everyone close their eyes again and pull forth the first eidetic image: the company’s current phone design. Once everyone in the group has that

Eidetic image method contin..

- Ask the group to picture the current design in their favorite color or at their individual ideal size. Ask them to add features they wish the current design had originally included. Maybe they'll add a better camera or a larger screen. After everyone has arrived at an image of their ideal phone design in their mind, you will randomly ask a team member to share exactly what their enhanced version looks like. Once they've shared, record that idea. Now have everyone picture that new version of the phone and you can begin layering ideas on top of it. In the end, you can end up with hundreds of new concrete ideas—ranging from the color to the features to the size.
- This method works best when the goal isn't to reinvent the wheel but rather to enhance it. While the group should not focus on costs, their ideas should

Online Brainstorming (Brain-netting)



Online Brainstorming (Brain-netting)

- For this group brainstorming technique, all you need is a central location for team members to write down their ideas. If all of your employees are in the same time zone, you can host real-time brainstorms over Slack to develop ideas together. If your team is distributed, you can put together a running Google doc that allows team members to write down their ideas whenever inspiration hits, allowing for busy schedules and time differences.
- For teams in the same city, one option is to use We Work On Demand or We Work All Access to book a conference room or common space for in-person brainstorming together.

Online Brainstorming (Brain-netting)

- After everyone writes down their ideas, it’s important to follow up to decide which ideas to pursue, so this technique is best used for idea capture, with separate meetings for critique, planning, and execution.
- This technique encourages remote employees to participate and puts everyone on the same playing field. You can also keep everyone’s identity anonymous if that helps the team contribute more freely.

Round-robin brainstorming

Round-robin brainstorming

Round-robin brainstorming

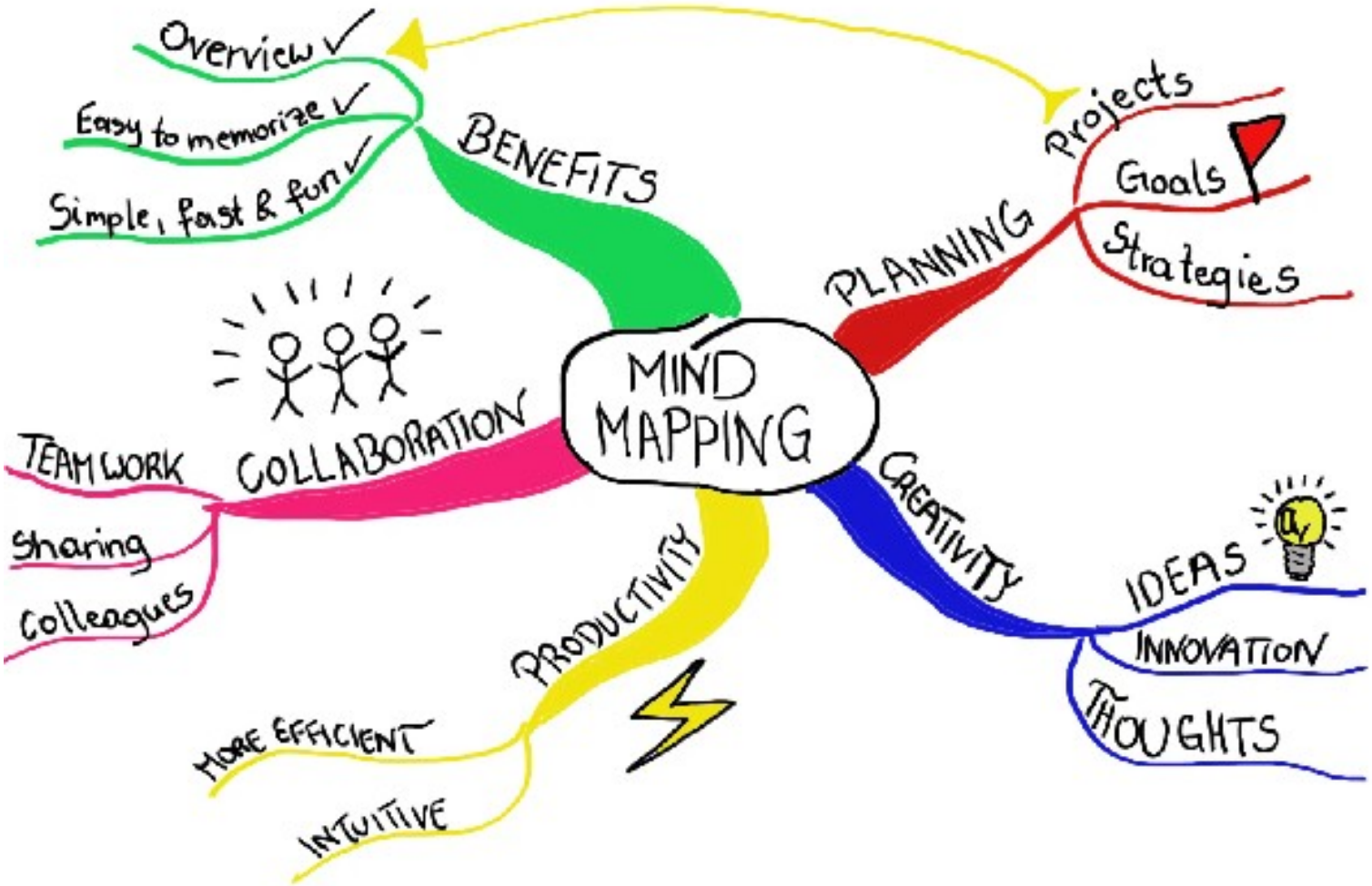
- In a round-robin brainstorm, every member of the meeting participates, contributing one idea to the brainstorm. The first rule is that the group has to make it around the whole room at least once before anyone can contribute a second idea or criticize, elaborate on, or discuss any of the ideas. The second rule is that no one can say, “My idea was already said.” You can come back to that person at the end when they’ve had more time to think. It’s also a good idea to give the team some time to prepare ideas before the brainstorm meeting.
- Like rapid ideation, this technique encourages (read: requires) everyone to participate and allows the team members to get all of their ideas out before moving on to the critique phase of the brainstorm.

Step-ladder technique

Step-ladder technique

- The step-ladder technique, while a bit complex, is a great way to make sure the group isn’t heavily influenced by the first few ideas or by the loudest people in the room.
- To use the step-ladder technique, a facilitator first introduces the brainstorming topic and then everyone leaves the room except for two people. Those two brainstorm together for a few minutes before a third person comes back into the room. The third person shares some of their ideas, before discussing the ideas that the first two discussed. Individuals return to the room one by one, sharing their ideas before learning about the other ideas that have been discussed. Outside the room, the other teammates can either continue to brainstorm and write down ideas or go back to individual work, but they should not discuss their ideas with anyone until they are inside the room.
- If your group is too big, you’re better off going with a simpler technique, as the step-ladder technique takes some time.

Mind Mapping

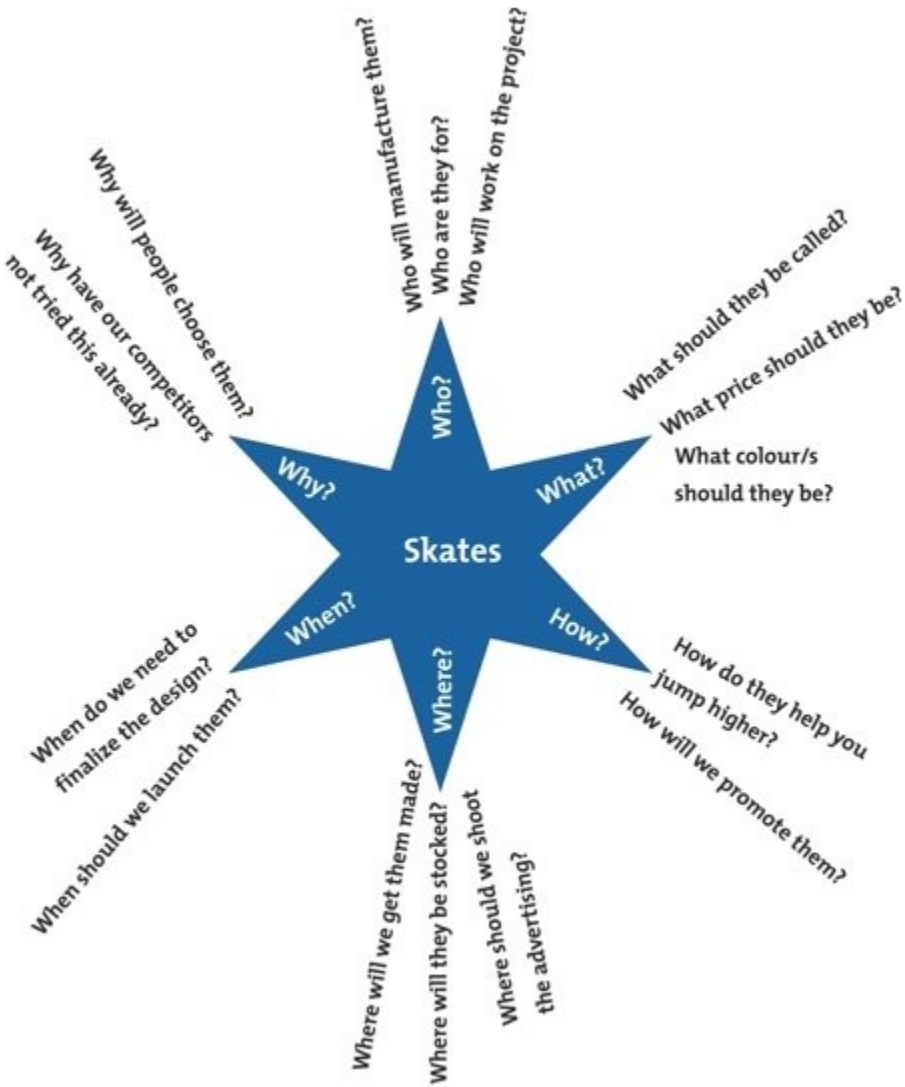


Mind mapping

- Sometimes, the first idea shared with the group isn’t the right idea, but it sparks three better ideas—that’s where mind mapping comes in. In this technique, the group starts with one idea and then draws lines connecting sub-ideas to the first one. Mind mapping is a visual way to approach brainstorms and can be helpful for those who think visually.

Starbursting

Starbursting



Starbursting

- Starbursting is a later-stage brainstorming technique that can be implemented when a group has already selected an idea to elaborate upon and potentially execute.
- In a starburst brainstorming session, your team will start with an idea or challenge at the center and then create a six-point star around it. Each point represents a question: who, what, when, where, why, and how. For example, who is this product targeting? When would be a good time to launch it? What is our motivation for creating this product?
- Because it focuses on questions rather than answers, starbursting encourages the group to examine an idea from every angle. Presenting an idea in this way frees the person who generated the idea from having to defend it or figure out how to execute it on their own. Instead, the team works on solutions together.

Change of scenery

Change of scenery

- Moving your brainstorm outside to a casual lunch place or even a different floor in your building can help get new ideas flowing. Physical space plays a big part in how employees work, think, and feel. When a team is constantly brainstorming together in the same room, with the same group of people, the brainstorms may feel repetitive and uninspiring. The change of scenery provided by a brand-new space, even for a short period of time, can help people think differently and devise new ideas.

Reverse Brainstorming

Reverse Brainstorming

- The basic technique of brainstorming asks the participants of the activity to solve problems. Reverse brainstorming instead asks the participants to list all of the problems and the ways to cause problems.
- When all of the team members have listed all of the ways to cause problems, then you will be properly ready to solve them because you would know what can cause potential issues in any current or future strategy.

Trigger Method

- **Trigger Method.** Brainstorm on as many ideas as possible. Then select the best ones and brainstorm on those ideas as ‘triggers’ for more ideas. Repeat until you find the best solution.
- The trigger method is analysis based on repetition. One idea triggers another and another and so on until as many thoughts as possible are generated.
- Problem is defined, debated and ideas noted.
- A selection of these ideas are collected, then 5–10 are chosen for further ideation
- The 5–10 are displayed and used as ‘triggers’ to generate more ideas.
- Debating and discussing boosts teambuilding.

Trigger Method

Trigger Sessions are a good way of getting lots of ideas down from untrained resources.

- The Problem owner defines the problem
- Each member of group writes down his ideas in shorthand (2 minutes only)
- One member reads out his list – others silently cross out ideas read out and write down “Hitch-hiked ”ideas, i.e. ideas they get when listening to other members’ ideas
- The second member reads out his list of ideas not already covered, followed in turn by other members
- The last member reads out his original list and his “Hitch-hiked” list and procedure is repeated counter current (ie, if there are 6 folk, the order goes 1,2,3,4,5,6,5,4,3,2,1,2,3,4,5,6…)
- A good group will be able to manage seven passes. Everyone’s paper is then collected and can be typed up into a single list of ideas – all duplicates should have been crossed out during the session.

101 Brainstorming

- Be open to every idea. List everything you think and don’t censor yourself or others. Brainstorming starts by creating all kind of ideas that can be really crazy and by being open to all kind of ideas instead of right away rejecting some your brain become more creative.
- It’s important to think the place and time for brainstorming. Creative location might inspire people more than some office. It’s also important to make sure people feel comfortable so that they aren’t hungry, it’s not too warm, or the chairs aren’t uncomfortable.
- Often talking with other people is better than thinking alone because as you explain ideas you might see something new or the other people might add something to your ideas. If brainstorming is done alone it often helps to say things out loud. Writing things done is anyways necessary to document ideas but it might help to understand things better.

Conclusion

- Brainstorming is well-known to yield a large quantity of ideas and generate high-quality solutions. More so, teams can leverage brainstorming using these brainstorming techniques. Truly, teams can get new ideas flowing and unleash truly creative ideas.

Individual brainstorming

- "**Individual brainstorming**" is the use of **brainstorming** in solitary situations. It typically includes such techniques as free writing, free speaking, word association, and drawing a mind map, which is a visual note taking technique in which people diagram their thoughts.

Thank you